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ABSTRACT

Addressing the Pittsburgh public school system's need for staff evaluation, Pittsburgh's Research-Based Instructional Supervisory Model (PRISM) is an adaptation of Madeline Hunter's materials on effective teaching and Theodore Forte's synthesis of Hunter's materials in his "Workshop on Instructional Skills." While total PRISM implementation consists of three stages, PRISM stage 1's use of the Hunter/Forte model in an ongoing staff development program itself consists of two training stages. Following training stage 1's emphasis on presentation and discussion of the model's theory, stage 2 allows participants to see how the model can be applied in daily instruction. Initially, in 1981-82, 82 Pittsburgh public school principals, 55 instructional supervisors, and a small cadre of effective teachers received training. In 1982-83, other teachers were trained, so that by the end of the school year PRISM was disseminated as a performance evaluation standard throughout the system. PRISM 2 focuses on developing leadership skills required of principals and superintendents; PRISM 3 involves the establishment of teacher centers for secondary, elementary, and middle schools. Although PRISM 3 has yet to be implemented, PRISM 1 and 2 have met with a universally enthusiastic response. (JBM)

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P R I S M

Pittsburgh Research-Based Instructional Supervisory Model

A Staff Development Program

Pittsburgh Public Schools
Pittsburgh, PA

Richard C. Wallace, Jr., Superintendent

EA 015 818

Introduction

PRISM, Pittsburgh's Research-Based Instructional Supervisory Model, is the name for the Staff Development Program in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

In February, 1981, the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education adopted two priorities for the school district: school improvement and cost effective management. In that resolution the Board agreed to "assign resources and concentrate its efforts to resolve problems within the priority areas in relation to: student achievement in the basic skills, staff evaluation, student discipline, attraction and retention of students, enrollment decline, increased effectiveness of individual schools."

The two priority areas and the six specific needs surfaced as major concerns in a district-wide needs assessment initiated by Richard C. Wallace, Jr. shortly after assuming the Superintendency in the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

PRISM addresses the staff evaluation need. It provides a vehicle through which a system-wide standard for excellence can be established by providing a unified approach to effective instruction. The concept was initiated by the Instructional Leadership Committee convened in March 1981, by Dr. Wallace. The committee of twenty persons included teachers, supervisors, principals, and central staff. It approached staff evaluation by recommending that Dr. Madeline Hunter's materials on effective teaching be adapted to Pittsburgh's needs. It also recommended that Dr. Theodore Forte's Workshop on Instructional Skills be utilized in developing Pittsburgh's model. Dr. Hunter is a researcher and professor at U.C.L.A. and at the time was also principal of the U.C.L.A. Laboratory School. Dr. Forte had synthesized the Madeline Hunter materials and successfully developed a system in the Norfolk, Va., Public Schools for increasing the effectiveness of teaching. At that time he was Director for Staff Development and Human Relations in Norfolk.

Pittsburgh's model evolved from the work of the Staff Development personnel appointed in July, 1981. The staff consists of a Staff Development Director and four Associate Directors, all of whom were members of the Instructional Leadership Committee. The Director is from the Central Staff and chaired the committee. Of the Associate Directors, prior to their appointment to the Staff Development Team, three were practicing principals of an elementary, a middle, and a secondary school; the fourth was a program specialist at the central staff level. During July, August, and September, the staff developed the model, acquired the theoretical knowledge and skill in teaching certain key components of the Madeline Hunter Effective Teaching Model by individual and team study, and by attending training sessions conducted by Dr. Madeline Hunter and Dr. Theodore Forte.

THE MODEL

The Model is Pittsburgh's adaptation to Madeline Hunter's materials and Theodore Forte's synthesis of Hunter's materials in his Workshop on Instructional Skills. As of September, 1982, PRISM focuses on:

- .. Instructional Objectives
- .. Lesson Design
- .. Observation of Teaching
- .. Anecdotal Note-Taking
- .. Analysis of Anecdotal Notes
- .. Conference Styles
- .. Principles of Learning
  - Motivation
  - Reinforcement
  - Practice
    - Meaning
    - Modeling
    - Monitoring
  - Sequence
  - Retention
  - Transfer
- .. Guided Practice in all Phases of Model
- .. Teaching a Lesson to Peers
- .. Giving and Receiving Structured Feedback

PRISM Training Program

PRISM implementation consists of three programs referred to as PRISM I, II, and III.

PRISM I is the ongoing staff development program in the use of the model outlined above. PRISM II focuses on those skills that are necessary for educational leadership. PRISM III is the teacher center for secondary teachers.

PRISM I consists of two stages of training by the four associate directors. They are referred to as the Staff Development Team (SDT).

During Stage I, participants are engaged by the SDT in five 6 hour training sessions; the first two sessions are taught on consecutive days; the remaining 3 sessions are spaced so that there is practice and coaching time between sessions. The team teaches the theory of the model and leads the participants through practice sessions in using particular aspects of the model.

Participants review and rethink the research which describes effective teaching; they examine deliberate teaching behaviors which bring about increased, improved, easier, and more rapid learning for students; they are shown video tapes of teaching and practice taking anecdotal notes while observing. These verbatim notes of what happens in a classroom between students and teacher provide objective data. Using the model as a standard of excellence, the participants analyze the data to find successful teaching techniques; these are discussed with the teacher in a conference so that

good procedures can be repeated. Communicating effectively with the teacher about what is observed is a major consideration of the model. Through the conference the participants discuss a teaching sequence and plan together for the continued conscious use of effective techniques, or for improving teaching strategies.

Specific conference styles to accomplish specific objectives are introduced and modeled for the participants. Conferencing is practiced with a cadre of teachers utilizing the teachers' classrooms as laboratories in which the participant can observe, analyze, and practice the ideas and techniques contained in the model.

The culmination of Stage I training occurs when the participants are required to demonstrate their comprehension of the model. They are asked to teach. First they plan a lesson for adults, incorporating the theories and methods of the model. They teach this lesson to their peers consciously applying the model they have learned. They have their lesson analyzed by their peers and they receive structured feedback in the form of a conference. Simultaneously a member of the SDT takes notes on the conference in order to help improve the conferencer's techniques.

Stage 2 provides a clinical experience for participants who are principals and supervisors. Principals have the opportunity to actually apply what they have learned in the first 30 hours of training by teaching students for a single period a day over a ten day period; supervisors participate over a five day period. In a plan-teach-observe-confer cycle, they experience how the model can be applied daily in the instruction of students; they come to understand and to be sensitive to the types of decisions the classroom teacher makes while teaching to assure that learning is taking place by students.

The experience focuses on the questions: "What is good teaching?" and "How do we design it in order to give the student every advantage to learn?" The participants learn to apply the research in education which answers such questions as:

1. How are students motivated to learn?
2. What kind of reinforcement does each student need?
3. How much practice is necessary?
4. How does the teacher bring meaning to what a student must learn?
5. What kind of demonstration or example must be provided by the teacher?
6. How will the teacher know if the student understands and can do what is expected?
7. How is student time directed toward learning?
8. How will the student remember what is taught and use what he/she knows in learning new things?

The effectiveness of their teaching is observed by their peers; a conference is designed and given by an observer. A member of the SDT conferences the conferencer in order to promote improvement.

The Participants

The first persons to receive training in the Pittsburgh Public Schools were the 82 principals, and 55 instructional supervisors in five 30 hour sessions of training. They were trained in groups of approximately 40 persons

over a five month period during the 1981-82 school year. There was a concerted effort to train principals with the supervisors with whom they most often worked. The principals and supervisors selected a cadre of two to three of the most effective teachers in their respective buildings with whom to practice the model and to discuss the training sessions. Only effective teachers were to be observed for the practice period.

Central staff received twenty hours of training with less time spent on developing conference styles.

In the 1982-83 school year, the principals and supervisors with the small cadre of teachers will train other teachers. The Staff Development Team will train new principals, supervisors, assistant principals and deans and spend time in the schools coaching personnel who have been trained.

By the end of the 1982-83 school year, PRISM should be disseminated throughout the system. The outcome for students should be an increase in the quality and quantity of what they learn, an increase in the speed with which they learn, and an increase in how much they remember and transfer to new learning.

Once this standard of excellence for all staff in the Pittsburgh Public Schools is employed as a unified approach to the improvement of instruction, it will become the standard for evaluation of performance.

PRISM II and III

PRISM II and PRISM III are in various stages of development.

PRISM II focuses on other leadership skills required by the instructional process such as classroom management skills for principals, knowledge of child growth and development, knowledge of content, human relation skills, knowledge and use of materials, and planning skills.

During the summer and periodically during the 1981-82 school year, the SDT planned seminars for principals. Topics included such things as time management, test interpretation, utilization and distribution, test scores, note-taking, managing parental involvement, developing in-house student suspension, and strategies for effective workshop design. These seminars were directed by in-house principals and supervisors or outside consultants. Topics were chosen on the basis of a needs assessment survey of the principals.

For the 1982-83 school year, seminars are planned to meet other identified needs of the principals as well as those of the supervisors. The long range goal of PRISM II is to insure that principals acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are prerequisite to effective educational leadership.

PRISM III is the teacher center being developed to provide a clinical experince for all teachers in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The purpose of the clinical setting is to provide an opportunity for each teacher (1) to observe instructional activities in a real setting; (2) to practice new skills and techniques; (3) to receive feedback on that practice; (4) to translate theory into practice; (5) to receive an update in their specific subject matter areas, latest research findings in effective teaching technology, and appropriate areas in psychology.

A center for secondary teachers will open in September of 1982. It will be located in a representative high school with a full-time faculty and student body. Participating teachers will attend the center full-time for a 9 week period.

Planning for the secondary teacher center began during the 1981-82 school year; over 200 persons, including school personnel and interested members of the community were involved. Meeting in 15 different committees, they produced and submitted recommendations to the Teacher Center Steering Committee, which in turn submitted a proposal to the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education. On July 21, 1982, the Board adopted a proposal entitled: The Schenley High School Teacher Center.

In September, 1982, committees of secondary school personnel and selected central staff persons were organized to develop programs for the center such as: recruitment of resident staff; training of resident staff; design of magnet programs; development of programs for visiting teachers; recruitment of magnet students; training of replacement teachers; community liaison activities. Two additional advisory committees are in place: they are a Community Advisory Committee and a University Personnel Advisory Committee. They have been organized to provide linkage with parents, community leaders and business, professional and university communities.

When the center for secondary teachers is in the implementation phase, planning for the elementary and middle school centers will begin.

Summary

The success of PRISM I and II depended upon acceptance of the process by those who would be its beneficiaries. The universality of the enthusiastic response received after one year exceeds anything that had been expected. Reflection suggests that this acceptance may flow from a number of factors: first, the initial teaching was done by members of the Pittsburgh staff. These persons had come from the ranks of principals and were people who already had the respect of their peers. In addition, there have been follow-up sessions with those who have been through the training so that their progress continues to be monitored and encouraged. One other point needs to be made. The implementation of the model began with teachers already proven to be effective on the assumption that one cannot target ineffective teaching until one establishes criteria through experience concerning what is good. The magnitude of the task to improve instruction and promote instructional leadership is understated in this paper. Continued support of the Board, Administration, teachers, and community is necessary for PRISM to fulfill its promise.